Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original)   A triphone preselection cost database for use in speech synthesis, the database generated according to a method comprising:

    1) selecting a triphone sequence $u_1 - u_2 - u_3$;

    2) calculating a preselection cost for each 5-phoneme sequence $u_a - u_1 - u_2 - u_3 - u_b$, where u_2 is allowed to match any identically labeled phoneme in a database and the units u_a and u_b vary over the entire phoneme universe; and

    3) storing a group of the selected triphone sequences exhibiting the lowest costs in a triphone preselection cost database.

2. (currently amended)   The triphone preselection cost database of claim 1, wherein storing the group of selected sequences comprises:

    a) determining a plurality of N least cost database units for the particular 5-phoneme context;

    b) performing the union of the N least cost units for all combinations of u_a and u_b;

    c) storing the union created in step b) 4) in a triphone preselection cost database; and

    d) repeating steps 1) – 3) for each possible triphone sequence.

3. (original)   The triphone preselection cost database of claim 1, the method for generating the database further comprising generating a key to index each triphone in the database.

4. (original)   The triphone preselection cost database of claim 2, wherein a plurality of fifty least costs sequences for any possible 5-phone context are stored.

5. (original)   The triphone preselection cost database of claim 1, wherein the preselection cost is the target cost or an element of the target cost.

6. (original)   A computer-readable medium storing a triphone preselection cost database for use in speech synthesis, the database generated according to a method comprising:

    1) selecting a triphone sequence $u_1 - u_2 - u_3$;

    2) calculating a preselection cost for each 5-phoneme sequence $u_a - u_1 - u_2 - u_3 - u_b$, where u_2 is allowed to match any identically labeled phoneme in a database and the units u_a and u_b vary over the entire phoneme universe; and

    3) storing a group of the selected triphone sequences exhibiting the lowest costs in a triphone preselection cost database.

7. (currently amended)   The computer-readable medium of claim 6, wherein storing the group of selected sequences comprises:

    a) determining a plurality of N least cost database units for the particular 5-phoneme context;

    b) performing the union of the N least cost units for all combinations of u_a and u_b;

    c) storing the union created in step b) 4) in a triphone preselection cost database; and

    d) repeating steps 1) – 3) for each possible triphone sequence.

8. (original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 7, the method for generating the database further comprising generating a key to index each triphone in the database.

9. (original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein a plurality of fifty least costs sequences for any possible 5-phone context are stored.

10. (original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 7, wherein the preselection cost is the target cost or an element of the target cost.

11. (original)   A method of generating a triphone preselection cost database for use in speech synthesis, the method comprising:

　　1) selecting a triphone sequence $u_1 - u_2 - u_3$;

　　2) calculating a preselection cost for each 5-phoneme sequence $u_a - u_1 - u_2 - u_3 - u_b$, where u_2 is allowed to match any identically labeled phoneme in a database and the units u_a and u_b vary over the entire phoneme universe; and

　　3) storing a group of the selected triphone sequences exhibiting the lowest costs in a triphone preselection cost database.

12. (currently amended)   The method of generating a triphone preselection cost database of claim 11, wherein storing the group of selected sequences comprises:

　　a) determining a plurality of N least cost database units for the particular 5-phoneme context;

　　b) performing the union of the N least cost units for all combinations of u_a and u_b;

　　c) storing the union created in step b) 4) in a triphone preselection cost database; and

　　d) repeating steps 1) – 3) for each possible triphone sequence.

13. (original)   The method of generating a triphone preselection cost database of claim 11, the method for generating the database further comprising generating a key to index each triphone in the database.

14. (original)   The method of generating a triphone preselection cost database of claim 12, wherein a plurality of fifty least costs sequences for any possible 5-phone context are stored.

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15. (original)   The method of generating a triphone preselection cost database of claim 11,
wherein the preselection cost is the target cost or an element of the target cost.

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